

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-10 as presented in the underlying International Application No. PCT/EP2005/000938.

Please add new claims 11-31 as indicated in the listing of claims below.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-10 (canceled)

Claim 11 (new): A method of setting up a connection in a communication environment controlled by a communication system between a first node allocated to a first contact and a second node allocated to a second contact, the method comprising:

providing a contact element within the first node for the first contact, the contact element having graphic and functional properties and graphically representing the second contact, an unambiguous identification and contact data being allocated to the contact element;

accessing the contact data using a program and setting up a first connection from the first node to the communication system;

checking within the communication system using the unambiguous identification whether the contact element is approved by the communication system for the setting-up of connections; and setting up a second connection to the second node depending on a result of the checking.

Claim 12 (new): The method as recited in claim 11, wherein the connection in the communication environment is a quasi-permanent contact connection.

Claim 13 (new): The method as recited in claim 11, wherein the unambiguous identification includes an encrypted serial number.

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Claim 14 (new): The method as recited in claim 11, wherein the contact element includes a first part and a second part and wherein the graphic properties are defined in the first part and the functional properties are defined in the second part.

Claim 15 (new): The method as recited in claim 11, wherein the contact data includes details about at least one of services and functions for the first contact, and further comprising testing within the communication system the details contained in the contact data, and clearing the functions or services for use by the first contact depending on a result of the testing.

Claim 16 (new): The method as recited in claim 15, wherein the details includes at least one of communication services and functions provided by the second contact.

Claim 17 (new): The method as recited in claim 11, wherein at least the first contact is a user of the communication system, wherein a terminal covered by the first node is allocated to first contact, wherein the program is a user program is run by the user via the terminal in order to set up contact connections with other contacts via the communication system, and wherein the contact element is provided as a program object for the program.

Claim 18 (new): The method as recited in claim 17, wherein the program object is in the form of one of a file and a library.

Claim 19 (new): The method as recited in claim 11, wherein the second contact is a service provider, wherein the contact data includes details that are predetermined by the service provider, and wherein the second node includes a PC connected to the communication system and allocated to the service provider.

Claim 20 (new): The method as recited in claim 19, wherein the PC is a server.

Claim 21 (new): The method as recited in claim 20, wherein the contact element is displayed as a graphic element on the terminal of a user, wherein at least one of a graphic design and an animation of the element is predetermined by the service provider.

Claim 22 (new): The method as recited in claim 20, wherein several contact elements, each allocated to a different service provider, are provided to the user for selection; and wherein a selected contact element selected by the user is installed on the terminal of the user by a drag & drop operation on the display.

Claim 23 (new): The method as recited in claim 22, wherein the display includes a desktop of the terminal.

Claim 24 (new): The method as recited in claim 11, wherein the first contact is a first user and the second contact is a second user of the communication system, a first terminal covered by the first node being allocated to the first user and a second terminal covered by the second node being allocated to the second user, wherein the contact element is provided to the first user by the second user, wherein the program is a user program installed on the first terminal and run by the first user in order to set up contact connections with the second user via the communication system, and wherein the contact element is provided as a program object for the program.

Claim 25 (new): The method as recited in claim 15, wherein the details contained in the contact data are provided with parameters defining at least one of graphic and functional properties of the contact element.

Claim 26 (new): The method as recited in claim 25, wherein the properties include at least one of properties for a graphic design, an animation, a period of validity and an intended use of the contact element.

Claim 27 (new): A communication system for controlling a communication environment and the setting-up of a connection in the communication environment between a first node allocated to a first contact and a second node allocated to a second contact, the system comprising:

a data-processing device configured to produce contact elements with graphic and functional properties, each contact element graphically representing one of the first and second contacts at another of the first and second contacts in the form of files, wherein the data-processing device allocates to each contact element an unambiguous identification and contact data;

an administration device configured to provide the first contact with a first contact element graphically representing the second contact and to which an unambiguous identification and contact data are allocated;

a computation device configured to check, using the unambiguous identification, whether the first contact element is an element approved by the communication system for the setting-up of connections; and

a control device configured to control the setting-up of the connection from the first node to the communication system and onward to the second node.

Claim 28 (new): The system as recited in claim 27, wherein the connection in the communications environment is a quasi-permanent contact connection.

Claim 29 (new): The system as recited in claim 27, wherein the unambiguous identification includes an encrypted serial number.

Claim 30 (new): A contact element for setting-up of a connection in a communication environment controlled by a communication system between a first node allocated to a first contact and a second node allocated to a second contact, the contact element comprising:

at least one graphic element for representation on a display of a terminal;

a plurality of functional elements including an unambiguous identification indicating that the contact element is approved for the setting-up of connections in the communication system.

Claim 31 (new): The system as recited in claim 30, wherein the display includes a desktop.

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